

Remarks/Arguments

Applicants thank the Examiner for a thorough and timely examination and for acknowledging the claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119, noting that the priority documents have been received and acknowledging receipt of and accepting the formal drawings submitted on January 15, 2004.

I. Status of Claims

Claims 1-12 are currently pending in the application. This amendment amends claims 8 and 10, and addresses each rejection raised by the Examiner. Claims 8 and 10 are amended to place the claims in better condition for allowance, and not out of necessity for overcoming the art of record.

The amended claim language finds support in the specification as originally filed. No new matter has been added. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

II. Objection to the Specification

The Examiner objected to the abstract because of undue length. Submitted above is an amended abstract complying with MPEP 608.01(b). Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the abstract.

III. Submission of Declaration under 37 C.F.R. 1.131

Submitted herewith is a Declaration under 37 C.F.R. 1.131 executed by the inventors of the above-identified application. Accompanying the Declaration,

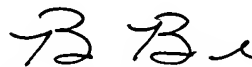
Exhibits A-E are provided as evidence to be considered by the Examiner in determining the priority of the claimed invention.

In view of the attached Declaration and Exhibits A-E, Applicants respectfully submit that U.S. Patent No. 7,130,618 B2 to Yokoyama, the critical reference date for which is January 16, 2003, has been antedated. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-12 in view of Yokoyama.

CONCLUSION

In view of at least the above arguments and submissions, it is believed that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance, and notice to that effect is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,



Brandon S. Bludau
Agent for Applicant
Reg. No. 62,140

Roylance, Abrams, Berdo & Goodman, L.L.P.
1300 19th Street, N.W., Suite 600
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 659-9076

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